

FIELD TRIPS OF THE CLUB

On November 12th ten members of the Club met the leader in Pleasantville, N.Y. and hiked up the unfinished Sawmill River Parkway where the remains of many fall weeds were identified by fruits, withered inflorescences and leaves, or characteristic branching. Half way to Chappaqua we left the parkway and scrambled up Flag Hill for a wonderful view of all Westchester County, more or less. After a pause here for lunch in the shelter of some rocks we continued northward, cross country, along a road, and through woods, thus covering a variety of territory. Occasional specimens of the following flowers were found in bloom even at this late date: violet, *Lobelia inflata*, yarrow, golden-rod, aster, dandelion, and witch-hazel; and with these reminders of earlier fall, the promise of spring was impressed upon us by the finding of shoots of skunk cabbage two to three inches high. Another thing worth reflecting upon was a wild cherry which had many vigorous sucker shoots. The leaves on these shoots were unhurt by frost while practically all other trees had long since lost their leaves. They were evidently young shoots which had made their growth late in the summer. Leaves of this age might be expected to lack an abscission layer and thus remain on the tree longer, but their resistance to frost seemed quite surprising.

HAROLD H. CLUM

OPENING OF THE 1934 FIELD MEETINGS

Lincoln's Birthday, Monday, February 12

Winter botany brought a party of twenty-four on the morning of February 12 to the museum building of the Botanical Garden where part of the time was spent in the examination of a varied collection of twigs. Attention was called to the various types of buds to be looked for and to their arrangement, size, color, and number of scales. How to judge a flower bud on species that show them in the winter condition was also shown.

This embraced cultivated, as well as native, woody plants to be seen on a stroll through the Bronx Park region. A member of the Field Committee kindly sent us a specimen of *Dirca*

palustris from New Jersey, and a request was made that members on trips within the range of the Club report the finding of this shrub which is rare in our vicinity. As usual in mid-winter, *Hamamelis mollis*, *H. japonica*, *H. vernalis*, and *Salix gracilistyla* were in bloom on the grounds of the Botanical Garden.

A brief pause before the unique exhibit of aquatic plants led to recognition by the party of various familiar plants of our region, viz:—*Lysimachia Nummularia*, *Peltandra virginica*, *Brasenia Schreberi* and a *Sphagnum* masquerading as a submerged species! *Eloдея canadensis*, now properly known as *Anacharis*, various *Potamogetons*, *Ceratophyllum demersum*, *Utricularia vulgaris*, *Najas flexilis*, *Proserpinaca pectinata*, *Lemna minor*, etc., were of interest.

Fontinalis antipyretica, one of the common species of water moss and doing particularly well, growing from a small rock, and a *Marsilea* species, attracted attention.

Perhaps the most fascinating plant was *Vallisneria spiralis*, in flower, the exaggerated scapes of the fertile flower showing distinctly the coiled condition which occurs only after fertilization has taken place. This is the plant so much sought after by various ducks which feed upon its roots and tender shoots, particularly in our lakes and southern marshes.

The canvasback has earned the title of the most celebrated of American ducks for the epicure, due to its being fattened on the wild celery. "Eel Grass" is another name for this same species, but should not be confused with *Zostera marina* which is strictly limited to brackish waters, particularly tidal inlets.

A visit to the Zoological Garden followed. Due to zero weather preceeding this day's trip, Agassiz Lake and the Wild Fowl Pond were tightly frozen, save for a small area close at hand, thus enabling us to study birds of the wild to our entire satisfaction. About 800 black ducks, many evidently the red-legged black duck, were lazily enjoying the day. Baldpates, pintails, one female hooded merganser, a pair of green-winged teal and a male European teal helped to enliven the scene.

Within the confines of the bird house were seen a number of native birds, and through the kindness of Mr. Samuel Stacey, head keeper of the bird department, we were privileged to have an intimate glimpse of the daily bird life there represented. The extraordinary intelligence of certain species, the ready

response to the advance of Mr. Stacey, with his unlimited store of patience and knowledge of the care of the caged bird led us past the luncheon hour. Here, indeed, is the ideal place to transport oneself on a wintry day!

A visit to the kinkajou, the odd mammal belonging to the family including our racoons, demonstrated again the response to man's kindness on the part of one of Nature's arboreal creatures, this individual being especially docile.

Some of the group continued through the early afternoon over a part of the Botanical Garden viewing the winter silhouette of trees, returning for a collection of twigs to be used in classrooms.

HELENE LUNT

BUCKBERG AND CEDAR POND BROOK

February 17, 1934

The south sides of the hills had melted fairly clear of previous heavy snows, and the temperature had risen to about freezing, from previous zero marks, on the field trip of the club on Sunday, Feb. 17, from Tomkins Cove, over Buckberg Mountain, south through Rosetown, to Cedar Pond Brook and down along its gorge to Stony Point.

Lichens were the most obvious plants under the conditions. Several Cladoniae were found, including *papillaria*, *cratatella*, f. *vestita*; *subcariosa*, *mitrula*, *caespiticia* and *tenuis*. Old walls at the top of the steps leading from Tomkins Cove station to the state highway were encrusted with *Candelariella vitellina* and *Caloplaca aurantiaca*. The unusual colony of the limestone fern *Pellaea atropurpurea*, on lime mortar in the cracks of a granite wall, seemed to be increasing.

The western extension of the Cortlandt series of rocks (typically displayed on Blue Mountain and Spitzenberg on the other side of the Hudson) in Rosetown, southwest of Tomkins Cove, was studied, in outcrops in the fields, and in the ancient stone walls. Its most conspicuous member is a hornblendic rock, with much black hornblende in streaks and large isolated crystals. It seems to be favored by *Caloplaca aurantiaca*. Handsome, zonate-edged colonies of *Lecanora cinerea* grew on smooth granite glaciated cobbles in the walls.

Lythrum Salicaria is established in the swampy spots back of Tomkins Cove and Stony Point in dense colonies.

The gorge of Cedar Pond Brook, from the site of the former Flora's Falls, now covered by the dam of the reservoir of the Haverstraw Water Company, down under the high bridge on State Highway 9-W to the salt marshes between Stony Point and Grassy Point is very interesting, even when covered with snow and ice, which obscured the lichens and liverworts we hoped to find. We shall make another trip there in summer when conditions are better for closer studies. Flora's Falls was the location of a rare species of the gelatinous lichen *Collema*, reported by Austin to Tuckerman, sixty years ago, and named *C. myriococcum* in Tuckerman's book. As this is a lime loving species, we thought it might be found on the limestone pebbles in the limestone-sandstone conglomerate, a border formation of the Triassic red sandstones which have their northern extension here, and which is seen in the vertical walls of the gorge just below the dam. But the icy conditions deferred closer examination until summer. The mile or so of gorge, down to the salt meadows, would repay intensive study in open conditions.

South of the Stony Point railroad station, the Great Horsetail, *Equisetum hyemale*, is found as a weed among the ties on a siding. *Equisetum arvense* often grows in such situations, but this is the first time I have seen *E. hyemale* growing in this manner. It evidently spread from a larger colony on the banks of the dissected river terrace, on the north side of Cedar Pond Brook, where it becomes a tidal estuary near the railroad bridge west of Grassy Point.

Color changes in lichens, on application of KOH, were seen on *Xanthoria parietina*, growing on an old elm, turning purple; and *Cladonia subcariosa*, in an old field, turning yellow and finally scarlet.

RAYMOND H. TORREY

THE FIELD TRIP OF FEBRUARY 17 TO THE PALISADES

On Saturday morning, February 17, a party of five walked along the Palisades from the Alpine landing to Forest View. The purpose of the trip was advertised as a study of trees in the winter condition and attention was given to the comparison of the buds of related species of Oak, of Maples, and of the two

Mulberries, the red and the white. Individual trees of each of which were found.

The most interesting feature of the trip, however, came as the result of the loud cawing of a group of crows. In trying to find the cause of the disturbance, a bald eagle was seen. Later this and another eagle were watched flying above the trees close to the cliffs or along the river. One bird crossed to the Yonker's side and soared for some time above the buildings, but returned to the Palisades at last.

In the river there were also a large number of scaup duck, a number of mergansers, and a few other species.

No evidence whatever was found of spring growth among the plants.

GEORGE T. HASTINGS